

'Mathilde' Screening Canceled Following Arson Attacks

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Karo Premier

The screening of a disputed film about Tsar Nicholas' love affair with a ballerina has been canceled in Moscow, Russia's National Film Foundation [told](#) state-run TASS news agency on Monday.

"The screening of the film is canceled for today, this is due to technical reasons," an unidentified Gosfilmofond spokeswoman said.

The foundation oversees a cinema in central Moscow which was due to screen "Mathilde" ahead of its general release in late October. The canceled screening was reportedly scheduled to meet the Oct. 1 deadline for the movie to be nominated for an Oscar.

Director Alexei Uchitel's biopic on the Tsar's affair with Polish ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska has sparked controversy among Russian Orthodox activists, including State Duma Deputy Natalia Poklonskaya, who say the film offends religious believers.

Related article: [Russian Tsar's Love Life Sparks Cinema Censorship Row](#)

The Russian Orthodox Church canonized Tsar Nicholas II in 2000.

Gosfilmofond announced the cancellation of “Mathilde’s” Sept. 11 screening on the same day two cars were [set on fire](#) near the office of a lawyer working for Uchitel.

The incident follows a vehicle attack and explosion at a movie theater in Yekaterinburg last week, an act the detained suspect said he perpetrated to oppose “Mathilde.” Uchitel’s studio in St. Petersburg was also torched with Molotov cocktails on Aug. 31.

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